1858 The Daily Colonist. 1959

"An Independent Newspaper, The Organ of No Clique or Party"

SETH HALTON, Publisher SANDHAM GRAVES, Editor-in-Chief

Published every morning except Monday by the Colonist Publishers Ltd. at 2631 Douglas Street, Victoria, B.C.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 1959

Growth and Disunion

FAILURE of the several Greater Victoria communities to get together on serious consideration of the merits or otherwise of amalgamation when the opportunity was offered last December inevitably has been carried forward into the present. Without any settlement of the basic issue of co-operation in some workable form, neither the city nor its municipal neighbors are making much headway on any projects which have a wider application than that which applies within a single area. Saanich is considering the construction of a new municipal hall. Victoria City has its eye on new police headquarters. And so it goes around the circumference of their borders.

The first casualty, as everyone has seen, has been any possibility of forward action on regional planning. Neither the city nor the other municipalities, with the single exception perhaps of Esquimalt, are prepared to bind themselves even to the nucleus of a tentative plan for the future development of the region as a whole. What can be said in respect of provision for future physical expansion applies equally to other forms of municipal effort where personal service is involved. The city and its several neighbors with police, fire prevention, street paving and other collective needs seem doomed to continue the four of everything that are in existence now.

Meanwhile, there can be no denying the constant, continuing influx of people to the region, nor the projection of that visible trend into the future. If Greater Victoria is crowded now for accessible space, it may be at its wits end with the passage of another few years. We would not like to think, therefore, that the amalgamation issue was either dead or indefinitely postponed. For this community it is much to be preferred to a quasi-metropolitan form of development through the multiplication of ever more boards of control or reference. Similarly, the four-of-everything certainly is being fast outgrown, with all of its overlapping costs. The pressure of population eventually will demand action.

Fair Share Wanted

THE federal government has not yet announced how much it expects to save this year as a result of dropping the CF-105 in favor of U.S. missiles, but it will be surprising if the total Canadian defence spending is much less than the $2,000,000,000 of 1958. What will happen, however, is that a greater proportion of the defence dollar will be spent outside of Canada.

The money spent on the Arrow jet provided jobs for Canadian technicians; use for Canadian products and much of it came back in the form of taxes. The money for the Bomarc will go right out of Canadian circulation.

In Victoria this week, E. H. Ely, president of the Investment Dealers' Association of Canada, said Canada could not indefinitely go on spending its defence dollars on non-domestic products. He urged the government to insist on a fair share of the North American defence contracts.

So far the U.S. has shown no willingness to accept anything but "U.S. made" into its defence spending, nor has it made any significant attempt to permit Canadian firms to produce defence equipment under licence.

The U.S. is not only freezing out Canada as a defence manufacturer, but it is also hitting hard at this country's natural resources trade. Protective tariffs have been raised against Canadian lead and zinc, and oil is on quota. General Petroleums, the only Puget Sound oil refinery now using Canadian oil has stated it has to reduce its Canadian oil import by 15 per cent, as a result of President Eisenhower's new decree.

The Canadian Government, meantime, is being forced to buy $6,000,000 worth of search-rescue planes from the U.S. for the RCAF because Canada was not given permission to manufacture them under licence. Yet thousands of Canadian airplane construction workers have been thrown out of work by the dropping of the CF-100.

As Mr. Ely said, it is doubtful if even the U.S. with its massive resources could afford Canada's $2,000,000,000 a year defence contribution if it had to spend as big a proportion of it as Canada is doing outside the domestic economy.

Another Gesture

PRIME Minister Diefenbaker has suggested that the army should take over certain technical civil defence functions, and the government will confer with provincial and municipal authorities on the matter. He has announced also that federal contributions to CD will be raised from 50 to 75 per cent.

Since civil defence is designed to prepare against nuclear war it is highly desirable that the army should have a main role in protecting the home front. Probably the name should be changed to home defence. The term civil defence implies some separation between civilian and military operations, and if battle were joined on Canadian soil there would only be one common cause. The name home defence would also appeal better to soldiers.

As the prime minister sees it, the idea is to convey to any potential aggressor a determination to survive and carry on in the midst of peril and hardship. That suggests an improved civil defence program backed by the army with preparedness given some kind of priority. If this were so CD would be adopted totally as a federal responsibility, in the same the national government runs the military services of the country.

There is no sign of this, or in fact of any real new substance to CD problems. The Ottawa report carrying the prime minister's announcement says there will be little difference in federal spending. Last year civil defence expenditures were just over seven millions, this year the amount will be much the same. Out of a national defence budget around $2,000,000,000, therefore, only about .3 per cent is being devoted to the support of civil defence.

Such a proportion is not likely to convince a potential aggressor that Canada is really determined about carrying on under stress. The amount seems very small when contrasted with the importance of the life and being of a nation under enemy fire.

Interpreting the News

Italian Oil Wizard

By PHIL NEWSOM
UPI Foreign News Editor

ROME (UPI) — An international mystery man is the spark behind one of Italy's most dramatic post-war economic developments.

He is Enrico Mattei, 52-year-old head of the Italian oil monopoly. And he is a mystery man only in the sense that he is regarded with a certain disquiet both by governments, including the Italian government, and international business.

The U.S. government keeps an eye on his activities out of a fear that his steadily pyramiding activities might prove to be a two billion dollar bubble which could blow Italian prosperity to smithereens.

International industry watches him because he has not hesitated to under-cut world markets in order to force his own entry. In any event, he is one of the most powerful men in Italy.

Mattei is an intense, forceful, self-made man who has acquired the art of wearing his clothes well and being at ease in any company.

At 14, he went to work as a painter in a bed factory in his native northern Italy. At the age of 19, he was a director of the company, in charge of 150 men. His father was a relatively low-placed member of the Italian police.

At the age of 30, Enrico Mattei was ready to found his own chemical factory.

Then the war intervened. Toward its end, Mattei fought as a Christian Partisan against the Germans, commanding 8,000 men. Those forces later added their peacetime strength to Italy's Christian Democratic Party, the post-war governing force.

With this political and economic background, Mattei was called upon later to eliminate the old oil monopoly set up under Mussolini.

It was then a collection of buildings with no oil and physical assets worth about a million dollars. It was Mattei's job to liquidate those holdings.

But he reversed his field. Instead of liquidating the holdings, he utilized them to begin intensive explorations.

He found extensive deposits of methane natural gas and began building an empire.

So far, he has been fantastically successful.

Holdings originally valued at one million dollars now have been expanded to an estimated two billion.

The British Scene... by Giles

"I'm sure Mr. Marples wouldn't like to hear you call me a nasty name like that just because I keep pushing button B instead of button A."

Thinking Aloud

". . . of shoes—and ships—and sealing wax—of cabbages and kings."

By TOM TAYLOR

IT hadn't struck me before, but Russia is a country without a name. Well, it has a name, but a name that doesn't identify it with any particular locale.

For Russia, you see, is officially called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and a stranger who didn't know Moscow was the capital might make a wild guess as to where this union was located.

The West keeps referring to Russia as such, and I suppose the Russians in the Soviet Union do too, but not all Soviet citizens are Russians. Some are Ukrainians, for instance, or Georgians, Latvians, and Armenians. Some are Uzbeks. No doubt many of them wouldn't like being called Russians.

* * *

In the U.S.S.R. there will be some way of settling the designation of a Soviet citizen. Use of the term Soviet in this way is wrong in itself, but it is a convenient reference for Westerners. Soviet for us means U.S.S.R. Yet a Soviet is properly a council, collective when sitting together at a meeting, and to call an individual a council is plainly absurd.

But if Moscow is at all concerned about our easy semantic manners it is Moscow's own fault. It shouldn't have adopted a negative name for its country, although perhaps some portions of the union don't think the implication is at all negative.

But most countries are clearly designated: the Republic of France, the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain, Canada, Uruguay, Cuba, and so forth. The U.S. co-opted a wide field when it began calling its citizens Americans, for there are other Americans than those in the U.S., but had it not done so it would have been in the same ambiguous position — for outsiders — as is Russia. By itself "United States" wouldn't convey geographically any more than does U.S.S.R.

* * *

Apparently there is no single Russian word to describe Soviet citizens. The only official term used is "citizens of the Soviet Union." They are fond of big words and long speeches in Moscow, but I'm sure they must indulge in shortcuts too. There must be in the common speech some equivalent to Frenchman, Canadian, Spaniard, Bolivian and so on.

If they have personal designation that covers the whole U.S.S.R., however, it hasn't leaked out, and in some official Western circles there is puzzlement about how to refer in one word to a citizen of the Soviet Union.

A note from the Associated Press says that President Eisenhower has settled the matter for himself. No purist, he simply refers to citizens of the U.S.S.R. as "Soviets." Being the president many people are following his lead.

Indeed the publishers of Webster's back him up and say they will make this reference official—for its users—in the next issue of their dictionary.

There is nothing like jockeying with a person's nomenclature to arouse his ire. Conceivably to call a Soviet citizen a meeting is enough to start a war. Happily most "Soviets" won't even hear of their new name.

Anyway, Russia brought this on by dropping its ancient national title.

With the Classics

We twa hae paidl'd in the burn
Frae morning sun till dine,
But seas between us braid hae roared
Sin' auld lang syne.

—ROBERT BURNS.

Letter from London

Courtesy on the Telephone

By RICHARD L. THOMAS, Daily Colonist Correspondent

BRITAIN is about to begin an experiment in nationalized courtesy. The post office, for a long time one of the most conspicuously efficient nationalized industries, and which—with the exception of a municipal service in Hull— operates our telephone service, has decided to let its hair down.

Mr. Ernest Marples, one of the most progressive Postmaster Generals we have had in this country for a long time, has decreed that the telephone service should be humanized. In the past the only kind of human relationship has existed in some of the remoter village exchanges still manually operated. There are very few now remaining, but they are still to be found by the diligent tourist.

On these exchanges anything can happen. I had the joy of being connected to one before the war and the dear lady who operated the unofficial exchange (merely another way of saying that the post office made starvation allowances instead of paying wages) used to keep us supplied with all the local news which mattered—from the fact that Mrs. Blank had telephoned whilst you were out and would you like to be connected now? to the really exciting news that Miss Doubletbank had got the job she went after in London. She would even ring you to remind you of the church fete (surely one of the first commercials?), and not hesitate to connect a call to another number if she thought you happened to be there at the time.

But there was nothing like this in important exchanges. These days they are almost all automatic and the human element only comes in when long distance calls are needed. Then everything is very formal. The nearest I ever came to bubbling humanity was when one operator persisted in getting a succession of wrong numbers on a long distance call she was dialling. "Looks as though you want a new dial," said I helplessly.

"That's what mother says" she retorted and then changed her apparatus.

But from the post office point of view that would have been classified as a slick retort which would have earned a reprimand had it been reported. Under the new humanized service no doubt the operator would have earned a merit remark for making a customer laugh on a grey morning.

* * *

Now operators are asked to be friendly with the customers. They say "Good morning." They will even give you their name if you ask for it (hitherto a cardinal sin on the presumption that they were being dated) and they have been told to be more informal. This may work well until such time as some peppery colonel explodes that he does not know what the world is coming to. (Who does?). And the whole idea is to make our telephone operators wonderful, like our coppers.

They are to be helpful and obliging, even if it means going outside the scope of official duties. One can imagine progressive public relations men waylaying telephone operators to present them with cartons of Sudso provided they tell ladies that they always wash their nylons with Sudso and they last for years. No doubt there would be a reprimand if she added: "They have to, my dear, the salaries they pay us!"

* * *

I happen to be connected with one of the last manual exchanges opened in Britain—its equipment is therefore modern and unlikely to be abandoned just yet — thus every call needs the intervention of an operator. Today I got a "Good morning, Mr. Thomas, may I help you?" and nearly collasped. Ordinarily it would have been a fair-to-grumpy "Number please."

On an early call from which there was no reply I commented cheerfully, "Leave it, they are probably still in bed." "Oh, no. I'll keep ringing until they do get up. I only know one person strong-minded enough to ignore a telephone."

I am told that if any subscriber attempts to abuse the new telephone code by being rude, facetious or forward he is in peril of being reported, in which case he will have a polite lecture from a senior operator. What if he tries dating an operator?

"That," said the supervisor magnificently "is like suicide. If it comes off there is nothing which can be done about it. If it does not then it could be reported."

And the reason for all this humanising? A post office team has visited the United States and decided that the telephone service there is more human, more considerate of the customer, and more helpful generally. We are out to excel that impression.

Civil Service Reply

The undersigned has noted the subject matter of your editorial appearing in your March 14, 1959, issue under the caption: "Unprecedented Action."

The B.C. Government Employees' Association is in complete accord with the suggestions made in said editorial, that outstanding differences between the government and its employees should be settled by negotiation. The unfortunate truth is, however, that it takes two parties to conduct negotiations and our government has, over the years, ignored our repeated requests for a meeting when it suits political and economic expediency. May we recall that in 1953 and 1954, after pressing vigorously for arbitration rights, the government refused to meet our representatives for a period of eighteen months. In the present issue we requested a meeting by telegram on February 12, which was acknowledged, but no meeting was arranged. We further requested a meeting by telegram on March 9, but also to no avail. We have always in the past, and still, stand ready to discuss our differences with the government. May I take the liberty of suggesting that if you feel that negotiations should replace the threat of strike action, or strike action itself, then may we respectfully request that you use your good offices to attempt to convince the government to meet and bargain in good faith with the association representatives.

We must completely disagree with your statement that we have no right to demand the tabling of the Carrothers' Report. On July 10, 1957, two days before the date set for strike action, the government presented our committee with an order-in-council appointing a board of reference under the Civil Service Act, to investigate bargaining rights. After studying the subject matter of the order-in-council our committee asked the Premier if he would consent to recommending provisions of the report to the next session of parliament and making the subject matter of any recommendations applicable to those of our members who were not appointed to office by the Civil Service Commission. The Premier assented to these requests and the matter was considered concluded.

After eighteen months, during which period the late Honorable Gordon McGregor Sloan resigned in April, 1958, and Dr. Carrothers was appointed as a substitute, and after the expenditure by the association of over $10,000 in legal and expert witness fees to enable presentation before the board of the best legal authority re the question of constitutional law and practice, the hearings were concluded in August, 1958, with our request that the board do everything in its power to file its report prior to the next session of the Legislature.

On February 12, 1959, the executive decided to take a strike ballot re wages. It was only after the ballots were in the mail that it came to our attention as a result of the efforts of "gentlemen of the press" that the Carrothers' Report had been in the government's possession since January 10, 1959.

It must be obvious that up to that time and since they have not seen fit to table and recommend its contents to the Legislature, or afford the association an opportunity to peruse the subject matter.

In view of the government's refusal to meet our representatives, and the government's apparent lack of integrity to live up to its promise to table and recommend the subject matter of the report to the Legislature, the executive felt they had no alternative but to consider that the government had repudiated the strike settlement of '57 which relieved the association of its obligation under said settlement and, therefore, proceeded to set a strike date under the mandate of the 1957 convention and also in compliance with the demands of our members at special meetings of the association as evidenced by telegrams requesting the executive to give priority over wages to the matter of tabling the Carrothers' Report.

The association is in complete agreement with your suggestion that appropriate bargaining machinery should be developed to avoid strike action. We have labored for seventeen long years to this end, but to no avail. I am sure the employees and all the citizens of our province would appreciate your continued efforts to convince the government that their employees should have the benefit of an appropriate bargaining procedure, even including arbitration with binding award if you so desire.

EDWARD P. O'CONNOR,
General Secretary, B.C. Government Employees' Association.

The Packsack

Of GREGORY CLARK

MY grand-nephew Steven, in Texas, age nine, called for me around 8 p.m. at his grandma's house to escort me around the corner to his Dad's house.

It was less than two blocks, but in addition to the blackness of the night was the fact that in the fashionable residential districts of these growing Texas cities there are no street lights whatever. In Texas, nobody walks. Everybody drives. And what do you want street lights for when you have headlights on your car?

Steven was wheeling his bicycle. It had a headlight. And he had brought along a big battery-type camp light for me to carry.

As we walked, Steven walking and wheeling his bike beside me, I let my light out, because I could see very well in the beam of his headlamp.

"Turn on your light, Uncle Greg," advised Steven. "It's best."

I did so.

We walked a few paces.

"Do you have teen-agers up in Canada, Uncle Greg?" asked Steven.

I admitted we did.

It seems a kind of criminal known as teen-agers was likely to be encountered who would grab your bicycle off you in the night and drive away with it in their car.

To Steven, teen-agers was not a word meaning an age group. It meant a species of gangster.